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ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL CIVILIZATION IN THE NEGEV IN FIRST TWO CENTURIES OF CHRISTIAN ERA

Settlement in the South: The Nabataeans

By NELSON GLUECK

THE methodical archaeological survey of the Negev, directed by the writer on behalf of the Hebrew Union College and the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation, has already made some important discoveries this season. During the past two weeks, after almost continuous search during the daylight hours, the archaeological expedition has discovered, under 30 ancient sites, the very existence of which had not even been previously suspected.

We have previously discovered that the Nabataeans, whose period of power extended from approximately the first century B.C.E. till the second century C.E. inhabited the Negev extensively, cultivated its soil, gathered and stored its rain-water, and carried on an agricultural civilization throughout large parts of the area, and that the Nabataean kingdom extended from Transjordan across the Wadi Arava and through the Negev and perhaps into Sinai. There were close political connections between the Nabataeans and the Jews, and there was considerable intermarriage between them. Herod the Great in part had Nabataean blood in his veins from his mother's side.

Creativeness and Genius

The Wadi Ovedat, through which we traveled again several times this year, having often at points we had not visited last year, is a classic example of the ability, energy, creativeness and genius of the Nabataeans, who seem to have been the most remarkable peoples that ever crossed the stage of history. They were able to flourish and build a fine civilization in areas where for many centuries others have not been able to survive, and where for millennia only Beduin have roamed. The peoples of the Roman and Byzantine and of the medieval Arabic periods based their economy and their entire way of living on the foundations the Nabataeans had laid. And if, in various stretches of the Wadi Ovedat today, one can see patches of cultivation, a small grove of olive trees, or semi-Beduin who still live in the area, it must be said that they are still, so to speak, harvesting the fruit of the labor of the Nabataeans who preceded them by 2,000 years.

All those who, in modern times, are inclined to dismiss the possibilities of fairly intensive settlement in the Negev as not being very promising should take a course in the history of Nabataean civilization, or at least should accompany our expedition on one of its trips through Nabataean areas. It would be well for them, for example to examine the great hill city of Ovedat (Abel), which was intensively occupied from Nabataean through Byzantine times. They should count the cisterns dug into the hill, and above all should examine the great well which has recently been cleaned out by the Government and which yields an amazing amount of water. They should marvel at the engineering genius of the Nabataeans, who knew how to dig a well deep enough to reach the subterranean water level which supplies water to the perennial spring of 'Ain Ovedat (Wadi Murrah). They should examine the exquisite Nabataean pottery, with its remarkable decoration and its amazingly sophisticated, painted ornamentation. And above all, they should examine the innumerable terraces, kilometers round about, which enabled the Nabataeans to preserve the soil and save the rain water and grow crops in an area where there have been an average of 100 millimetres of rain a year.

Creeping over from the site of the hill city of Ovedat (Abel), one comes to a whole row of great cisterns cut into the chalk cliffs on the

northern side of the wadi. One of these great cisterns, which were first cut out of the rock in Nabataean times (100 years A.D.), is still water-filled. When we visited it last week, floods of sheep and goats were gathered to drink of it as Beduin women drew water for their animals. And all along the wadi, from the Ovedat, one can see broken and intact cisterns of the same period.

Above the cisterns, channels collecting rain water are carved into the sides of the hill and along the length of the near slope. To his day, when the channels are intact, they still serve as pathways for the seasonal rain water to enter the cisterns. Where they are broken, they have been repaired by the Arabs. The cisterns are dry.

One's respect and admiration for the Nabataeans increases as one wanders along the length of the Wadi Ovedat, and along some of the neighbouring wadis. Wherever one looks, there are terraces and terraces, walls in the fields and along the wadis, and they are stepped back like ladders until they narrow to a width of from half a metre to almost a metre at the top. It is because of this great strength, that they have withstood the vicissitudes of the centuries.

I have often wondered how much it would cost in modern times to build or rebuild such terraces as one sees in Wadi Ovedat, or how much it would cost to cut out the cisterns that line its bank. It would be an incredibly large sum. If one were reckoning in Greek interest on investment, and if one were to take into account the cost of the labor of the Nabataeans, it would be a sum that would make one's head spin.

WE don't think we can afford to continue on the subject of Cyprus without giving a short summary of the political situation there. It has already been written on this subject in the local press. As always, we'll do our best to keep it as simple as possible. Right now, as these lines are being written, the Tri-Partite Conference (England, Greece and Turkey) is meeting in London to decide the future of the island to the accompaniment of a lot of shouting and cursing on the island. The problems confronting the conference are so complicated, we will not attempt to present the problem as it is. We'll rather show it as we see it.

The British simply want a little colony to remind them of the good old days when they had colonies. Just one tiny bit of little colony. They simply need a place where their army can retreat to in case of a war. The British want to keep the island as a base for their navy. They want to keep the island as a base for their navy. They want to keep the island as a base for their navy.

inscriptions in Nabataean and other languages (the Nabataeans had a distinctive script of their own, but their language was the equivalent of pure Aramaic; they also spoke and wrote Greek and Latin).

These rock drawings are found by the hundreds in Wadi Ovedat, and in Wadi Nitzana. They are usually to be found on the upper sides of hills and are carved on dark blocks of Nabataean sandstone. Frequently, a later rock drawing or inscription will be cut or chiseled on top of an earlier one. Our impression is that most of these rock drawings are placed on sites where burials took place, and where roads passed by.

One hill site near Wadi Ovedat, where numerous rock drawings and inscriptions can be seen is located at the coordinates of 014.5-12.1. Another site is located at coordinates 017.4-12.4. A third is at coordinate 018.5-12.4, another at coordinate 014.7-11.7, and still another at 012.4-11.7. Their number is indicative of what must have been obvious in the foregoing, namely, that there was very intensive occupation of the Negev in the Nabataean period.

This is the second of a series of articles, the first of which appeared on September 3.

vacation is over," calls the teacher, but like many other 10-year-olds among the 250,000 pupils who resumed classes this week, Tamar daydreams about those lovely days at the beach.

Photo by Hershman

What's New

By DAREN BEN-AMOS

The Greeks (90 per cent of the population) are crazy. They want to unite with Greece. The more idea of fighting for self-determination makes them drunk with joy. They don't know that when the British leave, they'll take out the Greek army, and they'll have to fight for their lives. They don't know that when the British leave, they'll take out the Greek army, and they'll have to fight for their lives.

We asked one of the Greek leaders whether he really thought that Cyprus would be better off under British rule. Without looking to either side he said, "Tell you the truth, I think when the Greeks come they'll tear the British out of the roads and ship it to Athens. But we still want to unite with Greece. It's our grandfathers' dream."

The Turks want peace. They want no trouble. They want the English to stay on the island and they want everybody to drink Turkish coffee. They are not at all sure that they would be better off under the Greeks. They are afraid that the Greeks have money and haven't yet forgotten what the Turks did to Cyprus when they were in charge.

So Cyprus and Live

Terrific sorry to start this piece with an unpatriotic and an apparently uneducational statement, but the truth is bigger than we are: it's cheaper to spend your vacation in Cyprus than in Israel. Now we've had it. On the condition, of course, that you have money, and not just ordinary everyday Israeli money. We mean foreign, hard-earned money. We don't know how you get this hard currency, but some people do. Last year alone more than 1,500 Israelis spent their vacations in Cyprus. We can only guess how they managed it. A pound sterling is worth 12.5 Israeli shekels. There are enough people here who for a sum can fix you up with a dear old aunt in Switzerland or an English who will take care of your expenses in Cyprus. We

assumed that the post office carries a cable saying something like this: "MY SICK FRIEND SO-AND-SO IS GOING TO CYPRUS FOR A MONTH OF MEDICAL TREATMENT. STOP HE NEEDS ONE HUNDRED POUNDS OF STYCHINE STOP LOVE DOCTOR RABINOVITCH."

But we won't go into the story of these transactions. All we are concerned with is to prove our astonishing statement. We also happen to believe that the long run it is educational. Let our hotel and pension owners take a lesson from the Cypriots and try to compete with them. The day we'll be able to go home, we'll be able to go home, we'll be able to go home, we'll be able to go home.

Accommodation and full board in the Dan Hotel, ILI per day, and in the Dolphin Hotel, ILI per day, while the hotel in Cyprus offers you the equivalent of ILI per day. Now, the rooms in the Dan Hotel might not be as attractive as in the Dan Hotel, but the service is impeccable and the food, even in the second and third class hotels, is excellent.

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The American Scene

WASHINGTON GOODBYE

By ALASTAIR BUCHAN

WASHINGTON, (CPN).

THE Americans, so they tell you, are a volatile people, quick to feel and to register the extremes of national optimism and despair. This I have always tended to demur at, feeling that Americans — the most politically introspective and self-critical citizenry in the Western world — are more likely to do less than justice to their own capacity for political courage and constancy, and to confuse a highly articulate public opinion with an irresponsible one.

But as we pack our bags for England after four years in Washington, and I try to set in order a confusion of memories and impressions, one of the most salient is of the extremes of attitude and opinion that I have witnessed. Bold and fumbling leadership, aiming at some sort of internationalism, truce, gnawing fear of ghosts within the body politic and robust calm when confronted with real problems — a sense of stupor and prosperity — the last four years have produced examples of all these.

In my brief span in Washington, I have had to report the growth of the black cloud of McCarthyism until it cast its shadow not only across American politics and policy, but across the intimacies of private life as well, and yet also to record Senator McCarthy's complete defeat. There have been two Presidents in the White House of totally dissimilar temperaments — Mr. Truman, who for his courage and ability to meet the challenge of his times, is in my opinion at least, to be rated as one of the greatest of his country's leaders, and Mr. Eisenhower, who has been both one of the worst and one of the best American Presidents.

In the past four years — or rather in the past two and a half — the United States has come within a pen stroke of risking total war, and yet has now renewed war as an instrument of policy with a publicity and fervour that carries with it an ultimate danger of appeasement. I have seen the state of the mind of the American people, and they don't poke you in the ribs or wink at you if you talk to a pretty girl. All this is in our opinion, worth at least another pump a day, and to spend two weeks away from Israel, away from people who know you, is worth another pump or two. You can save this money at the Berengaria, however, as it's loaded with Israelis. You like a more active life, you can go to a place like Falmouth. We spent a couple of days there at a small pension on the seaboard for the equivalent of IL500 a day. There you can swim under the water looking for fish or Greek amphipods. You can see the old tower and Desdemona's beach, and you can dance in the morning and on Saturday you can rent a car and go to an island. You can see the early throw stones at you or about Shabbat? We'll gladly pay another couple of pounds for that. Copyright "Dear Haskara"

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times between the British and American Governments achieve a degree of intimacy unparalleled between sovereign nations in peace-time, degenerate into enmity and unwelcome restrictions, and recover most of their earlier warmth and confidence. A Daumier or a Hogarth could scarcely have done justice to the contrasting colours of my time in Washington.

One should count it good fortune, perhaps, to have seen the United States in so many different moods, within so short a period of time. But few foreign correspondents are cold-blooded enough to be dispassionate observers of the country to which they are accredited. To me one's sense and liberal American friends in official or university life ground between the millstones of fear and folly in high places, particularly during 1954 — "The Black Year" — was as nerve-racking and discouraging to an Americanophile Englishman as was the year of Munich for Americans who had been brought up to take the probity and courage of England for granted.

New Understanding

Yet the past four years have been profoundly interesting to a student of the United States, more interesting even than the four that preceded them, though these witnessed the rapid development of an American sense of responsibility for international peace and stability from the Truman Doctrine of 1947, through the development of the Marshall Plan and the founding of Nato, to the Korean war. For in retrospect it is possible to see that the earlier phase of post-war American foreign policy, much more imaginative and positive though it was, was built on a shaky basis of domestic political understanding.

The central drama of my years in Washington has been the attempt of the powerful conservative forces in America to break the pattern of international responsibility established by a far-sighted liberal minority and yet their final and almost complete acceptance of it as their own. As one of my American colleagues has said, "It's great achievement has been to make the Republican Party a signatory of Nato."

Much of the noise and confusion that surrounded the ending of 20 years of Democratic Administration and the first two years of a Republican one were probably inevitable. For in American politics, lack of power corrupts as absolutely as power itself. The dislocation of all but an intelligent fragment of the Republican Party from the great domestic and international developments of two decades was an implausible and a weird mixture of vindictiveness and nostalgia in the minds of many sober and patriotic Americans, and this was something which only a steady confrontation of the hard facts of world responsibility could exorcise.

But three partly fortuitous developments made the course of the attempted counter-revolution more vicious and wasteful than it might otherwise have been: the low national morale of 1950, the early ending of the Korean war, the

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